



REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held January 12, 2004

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

ALSO PRESENT were Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Robert A. Manzi, City Solicitor; David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

Mayor Davis asked for a moment of silence in memory of residents Kate Connelly, Carol Dean Shifflett, Greenbelt Pioneer Ethel Rosenzweig, Graciella James-Hinds, and Giovanni Phillips; and former residents John E. (Jack) Snoddy, Annie Roberta Butler, and Lucille Mary White. She then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

CONSENT AGENDA: It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Herling that the consent agenda be approved as presented. The motion passed 5-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

MINUTES

- Regular Meeting, December 15, 2003
- Legislative Dinner, December 17, 2003
- Work Session, January 5, 2004

Approved as presented.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Advisory Planning Board and Park & Recreation Advisory Board, Report #03-06 (Lake Watershed Assessment): Council received this report and agreed to consider it during the FY 2005 budget process.

Park & Recreation Advisory Board, Report #03-09 (Skateboard Park): Council received this report and agreed to consider scheduling the topic for work session under the "Meetings" section of the agenda.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT ON BEHALF OF PJ SIEGEL: Council authorized the sending of letters to three drug companies in support of the family's efforts to have artificial blood products made available for PJ Siegel's treatment on a "compassionate plea" basis.

RESIGNATIONS FROM ADVISORY GROUPS: Council accepted with regret the resignations of Roger Brown from the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee and Jessica Mealey from the Youth Advisory Committee.

REAPPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS: Council made the following reappointments: Betty Timer to the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee for a three-year term; and Judith Ott and Jean Cook to the Board of Elections for four-year terms.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Roberts asked to add "Appointments to Advisory Groups" to the agenda as #19. Mr. McLaughlin requested that item #12 (Transfer of Liquor License – Chipotle Mexican Restaurant) be removed from tonight's agenda. It was then moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Ms. Mach that the agenda be approved as amended. The motion carried 5-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Charlestowne North: Residents of Charlestowne North presented plaques to the City Council and to County Councilmember Douglas J. J. Peters in appreciation for their assistance in dealing with their recent rent increase problem. Mayor Davis also acknowledged the work of Mr. McLaughlin on this effort. Mr. Putens added that the owner's willingness to negotiate should also be recognized as a significant factor in resolving the situation.

Acquisition of Sunrise Property: Paul Weinschenk and André Gingles, representing the previous owner of the Sunrise property, the Peterson Companies, attended the meeting to present the property deed to the Council. The acquisition was part of the negotiations to sell the property at the corner of Hanover Parkway and Ora Glen Drive that will become a new postal facility. Mr. Weinschenk thanked Council and commented on the long period of time over which Peterson and the City had been working on this deal.

Awards from Citizens Concerned with a Cleaner County, Inc. (CCCC): The Mayor announced that the following awards had been received by the City and various Greenbelt organizations from CCCC this year: City of Greenbelt—America Recycles Day Activities and the Recycled Lumber Program; Recycling & Environment Advisory Committee—Potomac Watershed Cleanup and Earth Day; Advisory Committee on Trees—Walking "Tree Tour" brochure; Springhill Lake Elementary School—Potomac Watershed Cleanup; Girl Scout Troop 4816—Potomac Watershed Cleanup; Greenbelt Moms' Morning Out Program—Earth Day lesson and plantings; Greenbrook Estates Homeowners Association—Neighborhood Beautification Project; Greenbelt Homes Inc.—Beautification Project.

Employee Service Awards: Mr. McLaughlin presented a 10-year pin to Mr. Roberts and a 20-year pin to Mr. Putens. He noted that Mayor Davis's 10-year award and former Councilmember Thomas White's 30-year award were presented at the staff holiday lunch.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS: There were none.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mr. McLaughlin reported on the fire in a Windsor Green townhouse. He also said the bollards have been placed on Hanover Parkway at the entrance to Hunting Green to test the design of the roundabout. He also described the process of the charette being run by AIMCO, with the facilitation of Andrés Duaney, to discuss the redevelopment of Springhill Lake.

Mayor Davis said she attended a meeting on developing proposals for the Community Development Block Grant program for this year.

Mayor Davis also thanked the New Year's Committee and others who had worked on that event. Mr. Herling also noted that some participants had requested that the City consider resuming funding for the fireworks next year.

LEGISLATION: There was none.

AWARD OF PURCHASE OF RED LIGHT CAMERA SERVICES AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments. Chief James Craze said that, having compared the two proposals, the Police Department recommended that the City remain with the Howard County coalition. He introduced Sgt. Tim Black of the Howard County Police Department, who described their process of decision on the bids. Sgt. Black cited a number of advantages to what LaserCraft would provide, including use of ambient rather than flash lighting and the fact that theirs is a non-invasive, above-ground system. After testing one of LaserCraft's cameras for some time, they believe the technology and quality to be excellent.

Scott Patterson, president of LaserCraft, said the flash technology has the potential to create a liability if it distracts other drivers. He said this issue has been raised in lawsuits in California, although it has not yet been found to be the cause of an accident. He said placing the system entirely above ground eliminates damage to road surfaces as well as down-time related to road repair. Allen Shutt, a vice president with Traffipax, said his company believes there are problems with the laser technology. Mayor Davis asked how Traffipax could afford to offer a price now that is so much lower than the price they had been charging the coalition. Mr. Shutt said one consideration was that the cost of camera installation was complete, but it was also because he wanted to keep the City's business.

In response to a question from Mr. Putens, Chief Craze said the increased costs with LaserCraft would be partially offset by increased citations. Mr. Putens then asked why LaserCraft is so much more expensive if their technology will permit a reduction of processes. Mr. Patterson said the price structure could be looked at again but that, because one was for the coalition and the other for the City of Greenbelt if the City left the coalition, the two bids were not really comparable. He said LaserCraft's bid should be compared with the others responding to the Howard County RFP. He added that he, too, would like to have the opportunity to bid for the Greenbelt program if the City were to leave the coalition. Chief Craze explained that if the City were to leave the coalition,

other costs would accrue to the City; in particular, more than one staff person would need to be assigned to it, and additional space would be required.

Mr. Roberts expressed concern about the lack of a long-term price structure, particularly given the difficulties of changing from one vendor to another. He moved to defer the decision for six months so the proposals could be more thoroughly studied. Mr. Putens seconded the motion, which failed on a 2-3 vote (Davis, Herling, Mach). Ms. Mach then moved that Council approve the signing of a new agreement with the Howard County coalition and LaserCraft. Mr. Herling seconded the motion, which passed 3-2 (Putens, Roberts).

REPORT ON CITY SNOW REMOVAL ON WALKWAYS: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Kenny Hall, Director, Public Works, was present to answer questions. Ms. Mach asked him about topics not addressed in the report: e.g., bus stops, walking access to the Metro station, and schools other than Greenbelt Elementary. Since many of these areas were, in fact, cleared, Council suggested augmenting the report to show more inclusively the range of what Public Works was accomplishing over that time.

Sheldon Goldberg, 7848 Jacobs Drive, asked about snow clearance for sidewalks along public streets, such as Frankfort Drive. Bill Phelan, Assistant Director, Public Works, explained that sidewalks along streets adjacent to residences are considered to be the responsibility of the property owners. Bill Wilkerson, 60F Crescent Road, asked whether homeowners were cleaning their walks and what might be done about improving this situation in the interest of pedestrian safety. Mr. McLaughlin said this was a difficult question in public administration since, although many jurisdictions, including Prince George's County, have laws requiring snow removal by property owners, residents who are physically impaired may not be able to clear their walks. In addition, it has become increasingly difficult to find people who are willing to shovel snow for a reasonable cost. Mr. Hall added that his impression was that during an average snow most residents clear their walks, with neighbors often helping neighbors, but that in an exceptionally heavy snow this process breaks down. Mr. Putens said he would not want to require residents to remove the snow when finding help to do it can be very expensive, if not impossible.

GREENBELT METRO ACCESS INTERCHANGE - STAFF BRIEFING: Mayor Davis read the agenda comments and noted that the upcoming State Highway Administration (SHA) hearing would be held in the Greenbelt Middle School gymnasium on January 22, with displays available at 5:30 p.m. and testimony beginning at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Davis noted that in the past, the City had cited the safety concern of adding an additional full Beltway interchange at that location. Celia Craze, Director, Planning and Community Development, explained that the City has no data to back that opinion up. She added that it is the Federal Highway Administration that has a guideline on the distance needed between interchanges, and that agency would have to assess this particular proposal. The Mayor commented that at every meeting and hearing on this topic, Greenbelt "keeps pounding away" at the issues, but the plans just keep moving forward. It was moved by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Putens that Council approve the sending of a letter in support of alternative #1 (no-build), citing past concerns about a public subsidy for private development, the inadequate assessment of impacts on local roads, and the environmental impacts to the SHA as the City's formal position on the Greenbelt Metro Access Study. The motion passed 5-0.

LETTER OF INTEREST TO ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION: The Mayor read the agenda comments. Mr. Moran clarified several points in response to Council's questions. It was moved by Mr. Putens and seconded by Mr. Roberts that Council approve the Letter of Intent that was sent to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The motion passed 5-0. Council further thanked Mr. Moran for his work on this application, and Mr. Moran said the credit should be given to the Community Resource Advocate, Christal Batey.

APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES: It was moved by Mr. Roberts and seconded by Mr. Putens that Sudhanshu Sinha be appointed to the Advisory Committee on Education and Henry Haslinger be appointed to the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. The motion passed 5-0.

MEETINGS: Council reviewed the meeting schedule. It was agreed to schedule the work session on the skateboard park and the interviews for the Forest Preserve Task Force for February 4 and February 11, pending confirmation of scheduling for the work session with the Astronomy Club at the observatory for February 18.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Mach and seconded by Mr. Herling. The motion carried 5-0. The Mayor adjourned the regular meeting of January 12, 2004, at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the regular meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held January 12, 2004.

Judith F. Davis
Mayor